

No. 167 April 1989

# Hillandale

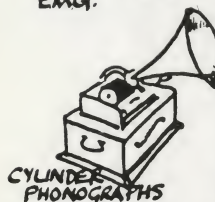
NEWS



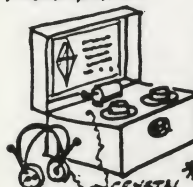
Mr. Roy Williams at the recording horn, while Mr. Paul Morris and Mr. Duncan Miller together control the recording apparatus



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163  
193  
194  
202  
203



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& DANCEBAND  
78's



GRAMO-  
PHONES



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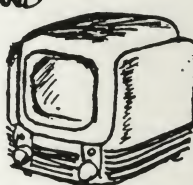
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# The HILLANDALE News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Founded in 1919

Editor: Ted Cunningham, [REDACTED]

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No.167 April 1989

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**J**UST AS WE PREPARE TO GO TO PRESS there comes the sad news that Ken Loughland, our Honorary Secretary, has suffered a slight stroke and is in hospital, where he is expected to stay for some weeks. Let us hope that by the time you read these words he will be home again and well on the way to recovery. He has all our good wishes. Charles Levin has kindly agreed to take over as Acting Secretary.

In February I mentioned the journal of our friends in New South Wales. You may think it a measure of the supremacy of "The Hillandale News" when its Editor starts publicising rival publications. Here are two more. The December edition of "The Historic Record Quarterly", a journal which John Wrigley has built up to a high standard over the past 2½ years, contains among other good things the start of an HMV dating guide by Peter Copeland, and an interesting article by George Brock-Nannestad, whom I remember meeting when he flew in from his native Denmark to attend our symposium at Hatfield. (Details from John R. Wrigley, 185 The Wheel, Ecclesfield, Sheffield S30 3ZA). Now I have news of the long-established and highly-respected "Talking Machine Review". Its founder, editor, and producer, Ernie Bayly, has decided to step down and have a well-earned rest. The torch has been taken up by two friends of "The Hillandale", John Booth (the proprietor of our printers, Anchor Print Design) and the aforementioned Charles Levin. They intend to retain the TMR's distinctive character, and I wish them (and Ernie too) every good fortune. "The Hillandale News" regards these two journals as friendly rivals rather than competitors. Well, for the time being, anyhow. Turning to another sort of publication: those who read the article on talking machine collecting in "The Independent" of Saturday 7th January will have recognised it as unusual in that a journalist in a national daily paper got nearly all the facts right. You may like to know that the journalist concerned, John Windsor, was so impressed by what he learned about the CLPGS that he decided to join us. Welcome, John!

T. C.

# A Recording Session

by Duncan Miller

**F**OR SOME TIME THE EFFORTS of Miller Morris & Co. have been pointing towards a full cylinder manufacturing process, that is, cutting masters, making moulds, moulding records in a new plastic material, and offering the results to cylinder enthusiasts. All this has now been done. The many skills that had to be acquired to gain this end would fill several articles, but the most interesting experience was the first acoustic recording session carried out for the purpose of providing suitable masters to work on. This is what went on.

On the first morning we arrived at our studio, a music practice room in Exeter. It looked almost perfect, a loud well-tuned piano in a room about fifteen feet square, with a low ceiling and no furnishing to absorb the sound. We soon installed the apparatus required: the new recording machine, the shaving machine, and the device for warming the wax masters to the required temperature. The Acme Quartet arrived and we did our first test to find the best position for each singer. We made three masters of this group, the results of each recording being ascertained by the look of the cut along, as to play a master is to risk damage to the recording.

The members of the quartet left, and the first of our two pianists arrived. She approved of the piano and was most surprised at the volume of sound it delivered. My partner explained what was required of her, while I busied myself with the preparation of more blanks, and our unpaid assistant, Miss Claire Rowland, went to fetch our first solo artiste.

At eleven o'clock we met Miss Megsie Bone and she met the cylinder recording machine. A few seconds of explanation, and then a test recording was under way. We hurried to play this back: the voice came out loud and clear, but what was wrong with the piano? My partner asked why the piano couldn't be played louder. "Because I need to hear the singer" came the answer, to which the telling reply was "if you can still hear the singer you're not playing loud enough!" The skill and enthusiasm of the pianists turned out to be a most important factor in creating the correct studio atmosphere: (remember F. Gaisberg). This little difficulty resolved, Miss Bone could continue with a take of "The Honeysuckle and the Bee",



Miss Megsie Bone at the recording horn

followed by "Love's Old Sweet Song" and then, as time was on our side, she suggested the song "Goodbye, Dolly Grey", but added that she knew only the chorus. How could we stretch this out to the required time? Improvised effects came to the rescue in the form of two tea trays, some stones, a bass drum, and a lot of imagination. Our first semi-descriptive selection done, we turned our attention to lunch.

Early in the afternoon we met Mr. Roy Williams, who is a great fan of Peter Dawson. After some test records he soon got the hang of drawing back from the horn on the loud notes, in order not to overload the glass diaphragm and cause what is called "blasting". In this way



some very accurate records of his voice were made in "Old Father Thames", "My Old Shako", and "Asleep in the Deep", the last of which suggested the use of an effect which produces the most curious result on the finished record. The method used to obtain this will remain obscure for the time being.

Next Mr. Philip Tolley made records of "I'll Sing Thee Songs of Araby" and "The Spaniard that Blighted my Life". No sooner had we finished this recording than we were joined by Mr. David Green, who performed Gus Elen's song "The Houses In Between", followed by a song called "Most Peculiar" recorded in characteristic and amusing manner. This brought us almost to six o'clock, the end of our first day in the acoustic recording business.

The next morning we were short of wax masters due to our previous day's efforts. To set us up for the day Miss Rowland and Mr. E.E. Fielder improvised a special duet of the comic song "Oh! Father", which entailed a considerable amount of movement to and from the recording horn to get the required effect. Then enter Mr. George Cornish, who made two very clear records, "Gilbert the Filbert" and "Seaweed", which was particularly bright and lively.

Miss Marie Kelly recorded some well-known numbers including "Morning Promenade", and "Don't Dilly-Dally", both sung with great gusto and character. The last efforts of the day were soprano records, of especial difficulty to record in an even manner, the best being "Love will Find a Way", cut onto our very last master blank, and bringing an end to the session in a most delightful way.

The machinery was packed away, the fine swarf from the cutter that had spread around the recording machine was swept up, and we departed with a precious cargo of master records.

At this point in the story we were to have given a description of how the finished records were produced from the masters, but our years of practical experience in this field would be a little repetitious after Dennis Harbour's erudite exposition in a recent "Hillandale News". For now let us just say that the masters have been made into metal moulds; the moulds used to make pressings in modern plastic material, and records of these unique performances, being the first acoustic recordings on sale for many years, are now to be had from the offices of Miller Morris & Co., 16 St. Johns Road, Exeter, Devon.



Recording "The Acme Quartet"

# Service Not Included

by Leonard Petts

**I**N REVIEWING "Berliner's Compact Disc" (December) I mentioned that the newly formed Gramophone Company had set up its first headquarters in the old Cockburn Hotel building. The result has been a number of calls querying this statement. Since there has always been doubt about the ownership of the premises I did some research into this about fifteen years ago. The results were published at the time, but did not have a wide circulation. The matter having again been brought into question it will be useful to republish the somewhat meager information then unearthed.

The Gramophone Company was formed as a small Private Trading Syndicate during April 1898. Until then what Gramophone trade there was had been controlled from Barry Owen's room at the Cecil Hotel in London. However, once the British Company was officially established it could obviously not continue to operate from this accommodation address. Some time in April/May 1898 negotiations were begun to lease, or rent, what were then described as "the Henrietta Street premises", comprising basement, ground floor, second and third floors. The entrance was actually in Maiden Lane, but there was a second entrance in Henrietta Street. One paper in the EMI Archives, compiled in 1948, states that the remaining fourth and fifth floors were owned by "The Coburn Hotel": however, a letter from Phillips, Phillips and Beard, dated June 23rd 1900, offering the Company the "three top floors", stated they were acting for the Playgoers Club, "whose tenants you would become". The only correspondence I was able to trace regarding the taking over of the 'Henrietta Street Premises' (which now became known as 31 Maiden Lane) is a letter from Douglas Young & Co., of 51 Coleman Street, London E.C., dated May 14th 1898, which states:

"We duly received your wire. Before taking possession of these premises we should be glad if you would send us a cheque for £50, one quarter's rent as arranged. We are preparing a fair copy of the agreement approved by

you yesterday, which we will send down to you on Monday for signature."

The Company appears to have taken possession almost immediately, for a letter from The Paris Exhibition Company of 1900, dated May 17th 1898, is addressed to "The Gramophone Co., 31 Maiden Lane".

The Gramophone Company now had an established trading address, one which it was to occupy for nearly four years until February 1902, and one which was to become famous in Gramophone history.

The paper giving "The Coburn Hotel" as the owners of the premises would appear to be correct, for on June 14th the managers of The Gramophone Company received a letter from Mrs. A.D. Philp, the proprietress of Cockburn Temperance Hotels, of which the one at 13 Henrietta Street, London, was part of the Group. Under the lease agreement for the Maiden Lane offices, The Gramophone Company had access to the premises through the Henrietta Street entrance. Mrs. Philp, in a long letter, says:

"I understand from my housekeeper that you take the back door key away at night . . . you will readily see the inconvenience and risk of my not having control of the back door at night. I will feel obliged therefore if you will please in future leave the key with my daughter or the housekeeper in the office. Do not give it to anyone else, or put on a pass key."

That extract is quoted since it shows the extremely small way in which the Company started its life in the Maiden Lane premises, having to account for the use of a back door key. The letter continues, asking about the Company's arrangements regarding payment for electricity:

"Have you made any arrangements about an extra meter for electric light? . . . I have to pay electric light and gas monthly, and, of course, I wish you to pay your proportion and





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the most correct way would be for you to have a separate meter."

Mrs. Philp goes on to ask Owen about his domestic arrangements:

"As to boarding terms. I will be very pleased to have you or as many of you as like to come, but I cannot give such rooms as you ask for at single ordinary rate. In all the year round I would give you such rooms as 51 and 49 at £2.2s. a week each and make each including two meals a day - either Bft. & dinner where there are others to dinner, or lunch, or meat tea, or meat supper to suit your convenience. I would give you 58 for two at the same rate for all the year round, or to make sure of a year's agreement if paid quarterly in advance, would charge you £180 a year for the two including the two meals either in the two rooms 49 and 51 or the two in 58 . . ."

Barry Owen replied on June 15th:

"I am in receipt of your letter . . . and in reply I may say that the key of the back door has never been taken away from your office by us, as we had a key made specially for that purpose, and your key hangs right there as it always did, so that your housekeeper can not know very much about the business. With regard to the electric light, the meter has been attached, and all our lights that we

are using will now be charged to our account. We had the whole thing fitted with new lights, and have also had lights put into the two side rooms . . . With respect to your rooms, I may say that as your prices are so high, and I am comfortable at the 'Cecil' it would not be worth my while to move unless I could get better prices . . . I may say here that a man in charge of your affairs over here would be a great benefit to your house, and if I could arrange to act in that capacity for you, we might come to some terms which would be of benefit to you. If you think anything of this, let me know, as I notice quite a number of things here that require the supervision of a man, that would not be noticed by ladies in general."

There are no further papers in the files to tell us whether or not Barry Owen added the post of Part Time Hotel Manager to his tasks as General Manager of The Gramophone Company at this time. There is little doubt that he would have been a great success at the job if he did actually take it on!

I am grateful to Ruth Edge, Chief Archivist to EMI Music, for her permission to reproduce the letter heading, and to quote from papers held in the EMI Music Archives. Leonard Pette

It might be helpful to our overseas readers to mention that the name spelt 'Cockburn' is, in England, commonly pronounced 'Coburn'. (Ed.)

# THE ZONOPHONE RECORD Part 2

AND ITS ASSOCIATED LABELS IN BRITAIN by Frank Andrews

## The Take-over of the Zonophone Companies

**S**EVERN WEEKS AFTER the British re-registration of "Zon-O-phone", on 6th June 1903, in Paris, Deutsche Grammophon A.G., on behalf of The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd., acquired the majority stockholding in both of the Universal Talking Machine Companies in the United States and in the International Zonophone Co. of Berlin & New York, although Prescott's shares were not purchased, as he would not give an undertaking that he would retire entirely from the talking machine industry. Three months later (September) Eldridge Johnson and his Victor Talking Machine Company bought the whole of the Zonophone business in America from G.&T.Ltd. for \$135,000.

Unfortunately for Johnson, the Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Company had not been licensed by the Columbia organisation, and as a consequence the company was harassed by the American Graphophone Company for the next nine years for infringement of its patents. This culminated, in 1912, in the Columbia company securing a Court Order that the Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Co. be perpetually enjoined from making infringing disc records, with all extant Zonophone Records and matrices to be destroyed.

When Johnson acquired the Zonophone business in 1903, the British registered trade mark passed to Victor Talking Machine Co.'s control, it being the owner of the Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Company.

Soon after the take-over Prescott resigned his directorship of The International Zonophone Co. and, together with recording engineers and other staff, established a new company at Weissensee, Berlin - The International Talking Machine Co.m.b.H. Here they made the new ODEON machines and records, first put on sale in various European countries, including Britain, in February 1904. The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. had eliminated one competitor only to find another take its place! And this while attempts were

being made to eliminate the new Nicole Records which had been launched in the meantime; but that is another story.

After the take-over production of Zonophone Records for the contracted Agencies continued in Berlin under the control of Deutsche Grammophon A.G. During the reorganisation of the business a London report, in September, stated that Barnett Samuel & Sons Ltd. had bought up all Ch. & J. Ullmann's British stocks of Zonophone Records, the Ullmanns having allied themselves with Prescott in setting up the Odeon business.

During their two years of independence International Zonophone's known British recordings were within the following numbers: 7-inch: 572 to 708: 1050 to 1134: 12784 to 12945: and 12717. 10-inch: X224 to X271: X330 to X353: X2255 to X2299: X2309 to X2372: X2404 to X2408.

## The British Zonophone Company

By 1st January 1904 the International Zonophone Company, then capitalised in the equivalent of £22,000, had received 170,000 Marks from The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. and 140,000 Marks from Deutsche Grammophon A.G. towards the cost of its reorganisation. All Zonophone goods, it was stated, were to be channelled through G.&T. Ltd.'s own businesses from then on, with G.&T. being responsible, ultimately, for all the trading done in Zonophone machines and records. The compiling of a solely British Zonophone Records catalogue was put into the hands of Louis Sterling, a New Yorker employed in the Gramophone business in London. He was to select titles and artists from the current International Zonophone repertoire, and from G.&T.'s current matrix stock, and also to choose from G.&T.'s unpublished recordings titles deemed more suitable for the cheaper Zonophone lines than for the Gramophone Records and the Gramophone Concert Records. Catalogue numbers on discs selected from International Zonophones were left unaltered.



For recordings from the British, French, German, and Italian Gramophone companies, and for new recordings undertaken for the Zonophone label, a catalogue numbering system was inaugurated similar to that in use by the Gramophone companies - the ethnic-plus-repertoire block numbering system.

Two major differences with the Zonophones were that the 7" and 10" sizes had quite separate progressions of catalogue numbers in each repertoire block, with the 10" distinguished by an X prefix: the digit 4 prefaced all catalogue numbers to distinguish the British repertoire. The British section of Gramophone Records was the only "ethnic" section without a distinguishing digit.

The Gramophone & Typewriter decided that the British branch of its International Zonophone Company's business should trade as The British Zonophone Company in separate premises at 81 City Road, London E.C. Louis Sterling was installed as the general manager. A new green and gold label was brought into use, supplanting the former black and gold labels as stocks were replenished.

A new but unregistered trade mark appeared, internationally, in advertisements, which was also impressed on the unrecorded sides of the discs. It was an encircled cross mark, with the word ZONOPHONE running horizontally and vertically within the arms of the cross. The labels bore the name of the INTERNATIONAL ZONOPHONE COMPANY above the spindle hole, with ZONOPHONE RECORD around the top. The records were priced at 2s.6d. for the 7" and 4s.0d. for the 10" size, reducing to 1s.6d. and 3s.0d. each respectively.

The British Zonophone Company's catalogue of February 1904 (which your author has not seen) was supplemented by a further 200 titles in March and another 100 by July. That month's complete catalogue shows that there were 410 British, 80 French, 12 Italian, and 8 German entries which had been selected from the former International Zonophone Co. catalogues. They had been augmented by 314 titles from G.&T. Ltd., 62 from Deutsche Grammophon, 8 from Societe

Française du Gramophone, and 2 from The Gramophone Co. (Italy) Ltd.; a total of 896 titles. The Ullman's catalogue of 1903 had listed over 2,000 Zonophones, with any other titles in the International Zonophone Company's catalogues available to British buyers through the Ullmann Agency. Only 510 titles of those were available as at July 1904, with all the American titles deleted.

The British Zonophone Co. were holding stocks of 60,000 discs at that time, although they were hoping to increase this to 100,000.

Prescott's Odeon business having survived for six months, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. finally paid him £1,300 for his shares in the International Zonophone Co. This company had drafted a new contract with the (Victor Talking Machine Company's) Universal Talking Machine Company. The terms of this contract have not been discovered.

A variation on the British Zonophone label appeared in September 1904 when "Made expressly for A. Lyons & Co." was printed on a series of Hebrew and Yiddish recordings sold from 156 Whitechapel Road, London E.

The International Zonophone Company of Berlin was put into liquidation in November 1904, and a new company was organised, with the same name, to replace it.

In London Louis Sterling resigned as General Manager of the British Zonophone Company, after being refused a request that he should operate a Zonophone agency. A Mr. Paul Mellerio,\* who came from the West End Gramophone Supply Company, where he had been manager, was appointed to replace Sterling, and the offices, showrooms and stockrooms were moved to 23 City Road, next to G.&T. Ltd.'s headquarters at No.21. The move was completed by the end of 1904.

Gramophone & Typewriter were still attempting to nullify the competition offered by Nicole Records, which sold

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\* Paul Mellerio came from the West End Gramophone Supply Company, where he was manager.

more cheaply than Gramophone and Zonophone records. Twice they had summonsed Nicole Frères Ltd. soon after they had placed their discs on the market. One claim was for an injunction to stop Nicole Frères using advertising material similar to their own. The other was the accusation that the Nicole Record Co. Ltd. were making records with a substance similar to that which Emil Berliner received exclusively from G.H. Burt. Burt was then both a director of Nicole Records and the Crystalate Manufacturing Co. Ltd.

Other avenues explored by G & T Ltd. were either to produce a cheap unbreakable record of its own or to purchase the Nicole Records business. Eldridge Johnson, of Victor T.M., advised against the former course, and G & T found there were too many complicated contracts to make the purchase of the Nicole records business a worthwhile proposition. In any event, Nicole Frères, in trouble with its music box trade, failed in early 1906, leaving its Nicole Record Co. without a sales agency.

#### 5" diameter Zonophone Records

One ploy G & T did undertake, directed at Nicole Frères, was to have its International Zonophone Company produce a cheap 5-inch Zonophone Record for those markets where Nicole Records were on sale. The British Zonophone Company first put theirs on sale in August 1905 at 9d. each. What effect these may have had on the sale of Nicoles cannot be judged, owing to Nicole Frères' own failure as mentioned. The 5-inch Zonophones were given a lighter shade of green label than the larger sizes and with an 'O' prefixed catalogue series, they were printed in black instead of gold, with the International Zonophone Company name above the spindle hole. The last issues came in February 1906.

A second variation to the standard label had probably arrived in September 1905, when a 40-record set of French language instruction was issued by Monsieur Bizeray's School of Languages. Accompanied by a text book they were advertised in the Zonophone Records catalogue.

In March 1906 Zonophone Records, both abroad and in Britain, had their second reduction in prices, with the 7-inch down to 1s.0d. and the 10-inch down to 2s.6d., thus matching the prices of the Nicole Records, which were still available from another manufacturer, after Nicole Frères' last supplement that month! The German retail trade at the Spring Leipzig Fair, protested strongly at the general cheapening of the Zonophone line.

That same march, Paul Mellerio was reported to have resigned as manager of British Zonophone and to have joined the Edison business in London as its Sales Manager. A Mr. Long was appointed in his place and, under his managership the company moved once more, this time to 43 City Road. The move was completed by May 1906.

After 3 years and 9 months, steps were taken in November 1907 to bring about a change to the Zonophone Records label, with fresh designs being submitted in February 1908. It had already been decided to cease manufacture of the 7-inch size, and in March 1908 it was reported that Lockwoods, Zonophone stockists in the City Road, had bought up 30,000 discs whose titles British Zonophone had deleted from its catalogue. Twenty-eight 7-inch Zonophones were in the March 1908 catalogue, with a few more added in April and May, when the new Zonophone labels for the 10-inch records went into the presses. The remaining former independent International Zonophone Company's catalogue numbers had all disappeared with the publication of the April to June 1908 complete Zonophone Records catalogue. The new label was still a shade of green with gold inscriptions but, superimposed over the whole was printed in pale blue the "Zonophone Circle and Cross" trade mark.

#### Zonophone Grand Opera Records

British Zonophone initiated a new series of Zonophone Records which it advertised as "Zonophone Grand Opera Records". They issued five discs recorded in Italian by a soprano known in the concert world, and credited on



the labels, as "L'Incognita". This was a "nom de theatre" of the Australian singer Violet Mount, also known in the concert world as Violetta Viamonte, the name she used when signing her recording contract on April 24th 1908. She was then appearing at The Alhambra, Leicester Square, London, as "L'Incognita", wearing a black mask while performing. It has not been discovered what style of label was used for her first five titles, which sold for the increased price of 3s.0d.

### The Twin Double-sided Disc Record

Discs with recordings by British artists on both faces were first sold in Britain in February 1904; Prescott's new Odeon Records, sold through Ch. & J. Ullman. Other similar double-side recorded discs arrived from Germany, with Beka, Homophone, and Favorite records closely following each other, and Nicole Frères introducing British-made double-sided Nicoles at the end of 1905, just prior to closing down. Columbia introduced its British made Columbia Double-Face Records in October 1907. Edison Bell, the oldest concern in the talking machine industry in Britain, introduced its green-and-gold labelled "Edison Bell Genuine Disc Records" in May 1908

The Gramophone Company Ltd. (the changed name of The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. since 1907) had yet to manufacture double-face recorded discs for sale in Britain, but the decision had already been made, and "The Twin Double-Sided Disc Record" was announced in June 1908. They were to be controlled by **The Twin Record Company**, simply another new section of The Gramophone Company itself but kept secret from the public. Headquarters were provided at 11 Christopher Street, London E.C., whence 10-inch records were advertised for sale on August 15th 1908, at a price of 2s.6d. each. The labels were beige with brown printing, and each face carried a 'T' prefixed number and a drawing of twin cherubs above the spindle hole. Later the discs would carry a catalogue number (serial) common to both sides. Although not on the first issues the catalogue numbers were printed with the release sheets. They began with

"Serial No.1" and progressed without any regard for differences in repertoire. The 'T' prefixed numbers, different on each face, progressed with sections of the repertoire, having a T2000 series for male vocalists, a T3000 series for female vocalists, T4000 for combined voices, T5000 for bands and instrumentalists, and T6000 for choirs, descriptive, and miscellaneous items.

Twin artists were those already recording, or who had recorded, for Gramophone, Zonophone, and "His Master's Voice", with some matrices in use with



the French, German and Spanish catalogues. Almost all band recordings came out under one pseudonym or another, as did some vocal artists and instrumentalists. Some titles had no artists' credits at all.

As with "His Masters Voice" and Zonophone Records, The Twins had monthly supplements after their introduction. The August 1908 supplement of Zonophone Records was advertised as a "CHAMPION LIST", and offered 38 new issues. It was claimed that they had been chosen from 500 sample pressings, some of the titles having been recorded by as many as four

different artists in order to select the best for quality of reproduction.

#### **The Zonophone Grand Opera Record Series @ 2s.6d. each**

The September 1908 supplement of Zonophone Records included the first of what was to be a regular series of Grand Opera recordings, the earlier issues of L'Incognita at 3s.0d. each ignored as participating. From remaining evidence the first in the series were labelled as **Zonophone Grand Record**, still with The International Zonophone Company name above the spindle hole. The labels were white with green printing, and bore the "cross and circle" trade mark over the whole. Selling at 2s.6d. each the record numbers were simply a part of the ordinary progression of record numbers for the various repertoire sections. It was later reported that so popular had been the appeal of this September supplement that an extra 100,000 copies of its records had to be pressed.

The Twin Record Company announced in March 1909 that it had been using a special method of recording to capture the tones of the grand piano, and took a full page advertisement in a trade paper promoting the "Twins".

The labels in the Zonophone Grand Opera Series took a new name-style in June 1909, with **Zonophone Grand Opera** being "substituted for **Zonophone Grand Record**." Other details were as before. Four of "L'Incognita's" discs have been seen with this name-style, but there is no way of knowing if they were the original issues or later pressings.

#### **Twelve-inch Zonophone Records**

The opening of the 1909-10 season in September showed that the Grand Opera series had yet another change in the name-style, being labelled as **Zonophone Grand Opera Record**. All else remained unaltered. Another innovation for the new season was the British Zonophone Company's introduction of the International Zonophone Company's 12-inch Zonophone Records, single-side

recorded with labels similar to the current 10-inch issues. There were ten discs on that September list, all numbered in the repertoire block system and given an 'O' prefix number which began from scratch for each section of repertoire. Additionally the zero prefixed numbers were given a 'Z' prefix, further to highlight the 12-inch discs' origins (although the first issues were listed with 'XO' prefixed numbers and not 'ZO'!) They were priced at 3s.0d. each.

There was news of two trade marks at that time. "The Twins" design was submitted for registration by The Gramophone Company Ltd., and registered in December. This allowed the words "Registered Trade Mark" to appear on The Twin record labels. The British trade mark in "ZONOPHONE" had been transferred, on August 25th 1909, from the Universal Talking Machine Company in America to the proprietorship of the International Zonophone Company in Berlin.

In the new year of 1910 William Manson, the general manager of The Twin Record Company, was transferred to a similar position with the British Zonophone Company. In earlier years he had been with Barnett Samuel & Sons Ltd., whom he left to join the Russell Hunting Record Co. Ltd., where he had been assistant manager in the production of the Sterling Gold Moulded Cylinder Records. His wife, Mabel Manson the concert singer, recorded on Zonophone as Freda Fairchild.

Although the Zonophone and Twin labels sometimes included titles recorded in Europe, the first disc to use American recordings appeared on Twin No.216 in February 1910, with John Kimmel on accordion under the pseudonym of "Pat O'Neill - melodeon". The two sides came from two American Zonophone Records. This disc was withdrawn in March and the catalogue number used again for the tenor Philip Ritte.

#### **The British Zonophone Company Ltd. and The Twin Record Company Ltd.**

On June 3rd 1910 both the British Zonophone Company and The Twin Record



Company were converted into private limited liability companies, thereby adding "Limited" to their corporate names. Each was given a nominal capital of £1,000 in £1 shares, all of which were held by The Gramophone Company Ltd. Zonophone's registered office was at 19 Tabernacle Street, London E.C. It was situated behind City Road, in close proximity to The Gramophone Company at No.21, then also the registered office of The Twin Record Co. Ltd. On 27th June "The Twins" registered trade mark was transferred from The Gramophone Company to the "Twin" company.

In July 1910 the "Twin" company found itself in a spot of bother with the Australian entertainer Albert Whelan, who objected to the company's advertisement announcing a special list of his recordings. He stated he had never recorded for The Twin Record Company, and he thought his reputation was at stake if his name was being used for another performer's recordings! Manager William Manson wrote to Whelan offering him an audition of the discs to prove they were genuine Whelan recordings. They were, of course; but Whelan had recorded them years earlier for The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd., and now the matrices were in use again. Whelan's misgivings were understandable as, at that period, he was under exclusive contract with Fonotipia Ltd., recording for its Jumbo label.

By this time the Zonophone Grand Opera Record series were being issued in artistically designed sleeves, upon which were printed verbatim the arias as they were sung by the artists on the enclosed discs.

In August 1910 the British registered trade mark in "Zonophone" was transferred from the International Zonophone Company of Berlin to the new British Zonophone Company Ltd. and, as a consequence, both the standard and "Grand Opera" labels began to appear bearing the British company's name above the spindle hole in place of the International company's name. That same month the Zonophone company submitted the words "The Cinch Zonophone" for registration as a trade mark.

## The Abandonment of The Twin Double-sided Disc Record and the introduction of "The Zonophone Record - The Twin"

On 4th May 1911 The British Zonophone Co. Ltd. purchased the stocks, assets, and the THE TWIN registered trade mark from the "Twin" company, with the latter company retiring from the talking machine business, although remaining on the register of joint-stock companies for a number of years but "doing no business".\* The British Zonophone Company then withdrew all its Zonophone Records catalogues, with the exception of its "Grand Opera" series, and coupled 300 of its 10-inch matrices and 36 of its 12-inch matrices to produce 150 and 18 double-sided discs under the new style of "Zonophone Record - The Twin". The records were catalogued with serial numbers which were a continuation of "The Twin's" numbers in the 10" size, but beginning a new series, at A.1, for the 12" size. Although the "Twins" had been abandoned, their repertoire was kept, with the original numbers and the 'T' single face numbers, to form the first 415 discs in the new "Zonophone Record - The Twin" catalogue. The 150 coupled, formerly single-sided, Zonophone Records, still with their 'X' prefixed face numbers, took the Serial numbering from 416 to 565. In doing this the former Zonophones split the May 1911 issues of "The Twins" numbering as follows: 409 to 415; 416 to 565 Zonophone insertions; 566 to 570. All were classified as Zonophone Records-The Twin in the catalogue issued at the time.

The June 1911 supplement, nos. 571 to 585, had records which had all been intended for "The Twins" catalogue, bearing 'T' prefixed face numbers. Thereafter, except for a special list in October, all subsequent issues, although carrying forward "The Twins" serial numbers, continued to have their face numbers in the Zonophone Record series,

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\* The Twin Record Co. Ltd. had its name changed to EMI International Ltd. in 1954. Fourteen years later it became N.A. Developments, and later still another change made it EMI International Service Ltd.

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which still acted as the catalogue numbers with those, retained in the Zonophone Grand Opera Series.

A new label was introduced for the newly named records. The dark green and gold Zonophone label was retained with its superimposed Zonophone circle and cross trade mark over the whole area, but in place of the British Zonophone Company's name there appeared the trade mark of THE TWIN with the two cherubs design in gold. "The British Zonophone Co. Ltd." and "Reg'd. Trade mark" appeared in small print below. Like the former "Twins" the 10-inch discs sold for 2s.6d. The 12-inch 'A' prefixed series sold for 4s.0d. each, with the single-sided Grand Opera series still at 2s.6d. each, the label remaining as hitherto.

To celebrate the Coronation of King George V in 1911 a 10-inch "puzzle plate" disc was issued by British Zonophone in July 1911. It had three separate recordings on each face, each with its own individual starting point. Styled "ZONOPHONE CORONATION RECORD", it had a coloured label showing a likeness of the King and Queen Mary. (Serial No.598). With the September 1911 issues for the new season, the Zonophone Twin label showed a slight change. The legend beneath the trade mark read "Product of the British Zonophone Co. Ltd., England".

Between July 1910 and October 1911 no additions had been made to repertoires of discs pressed from foreign recorded masters. In October 1911 there was published a special supplement of Jewish/Hebrew recordings from International Zonophone's "Eastern & Oriental" number blocks. Although issued in Europe with the proper 'X' prefixed numbers, the 12 discs selected for Britain were intended to be marketed under the former Twin Double Sided Discs, and had their face numbers changed into the T.2000 block for male singers and, as such, carried those numbers under the Zonophone-Twin

label, the last issues to bear 'T' prefixed face numbers. Gershon Sirota, the famous cantor from the Warsaw synagogue, was listed with 12 sides, along with three other cantors and a Jewish theatrical artist.

At this period British Zonophone was claiming it had twenty prominent British Music Hall artists under exclusive contracts.

On 30th June 1912 the first of 88 discs were deleted from the Zonophone Record-The Twin catalogue. The serial numbers had reached No.864, with No.18 never used. The 12" had reached A.72 with no deletions.

#### **American Recorded Artists appear on Zonophone Twins**

Not since the Jewish recordings of October 1911 had any Zonophone records appeared with foreign masters. However, from August 1912 until January 1913 ten sides pressed from the Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Co.'s "Zonophone Record" masters were issued as five Zonophone-Twins. As mentioned, the Universal Company was ordered by a U.S. Court to destroy all its discs and masters in the Summer of 1912, so some of the masters must have been despatched to Hayes, Middlesex, before the order was complied with.

In April 1913, what was then described as "one of the greatest honours ever conferred on the trade", was a request from His Imperial Majesty, the Grand Duke Alexander Michaelovitch of St. Petersburg for a very large number of "Zonophone Record-The Twin"s, played in the ragtime idiom. It was considered to be a great tribute to the products of the British Zonophone Company. Of course it was The Gramophone Company which deserved the praise, as it was they whose recorders, factory and workers had produced them.

(to be continued)

...oooO|Oooo...



# The International Record Company Labels

by John A. Petty

**E**IGHTEEN RECORD LABELS accompany this brief description of issues from the presses of The International Record Company. The parent firm, Auburn Button Works, first made records for Zon-O-Phone as early as 1902 and began manufacturing their own ten-inch discs about 1905. Production ceased in November 1908 after litigation from the American Graphophone Company.

Bill Bryant of Portland, Maine, USA, wrote an article for "The New Amberola Graphic" (No.12, Winter 1975) in which he detailed some facts gleaned from discs and press releases. Since then some other label designs have surfaced which add to our knowledge of these early discs made for many different outlets. These 18 examples have been supplied by Bill Bryant, John Petty, Dave Freeman, and the late Milford Fargo; all collectors in the USA.

The master label is shown as No.1 and it is quite colourful. Background is pale yellow; the name and encircling ring are red, and the other material (logo, data, etc.) black. The Excelsior disc (No.11) seems to be the one most commonly found. There are probably several more IRC designs - Apollo and Century are two others thought to be IRC issues, but examples are not available. The discs seem to have some similarities and may generally be described as singleface and rather rough in texture. The label is large (about 4 inches or 10 centimeters)

and the record surface is flat. Some have labels depressed: most, however, do not and are quite often worn when found. One or more of the following phrases may be on the label: "For Any Disc Talking Machine"; "New Process"; "Our Special Process"; "Improved Process"; "International Record Co." Background colour is a light shade such as blue, yellow, pink, green, silver or grey, and most have excellent contrast which photocopies well. Square Deal (No.3) and Kalamazoo (No.15) have less bold differences and do not make as clear copy as the others. With the exception of No.4 "The Nightingale", the titles, serial numbers, etc., are printed in Old English as No.7 or the style printing in No.8.

The Company seems to have used the same numbering system on all labels except No.4, "The Nightingale", which has a larger number nestled in the bottom of the rather large 'A', and the two examples viewed are in the 720s. Bill Bryant concludes that a block system of numbers was used below 3000 serials, and above that all types of material were issued in consecutive numbers. Bill's outline for the probable block system is shown below.

In the years before pressing their own labels, The Auburn Button Works made discs for both Zon-O-Phone and Talk-O-Phone, the latter firm located in Toledo, Ohio. These discs were less than

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 300           | Band: sometimes credited to Metropolitan Band, G.Poluso, Dir.      |
| 600           | Orchestra (Poluso's Orchestra)                                     |
| 700           | (or 750) Brass Quartets, with organ: lowest found is No.750        |
| 1200          | Male Quartet   |
| 1300          | Male Quartet specialties (descriptive selections)                  |
| 1500          | Vocal solos (ballads, comic and popular songs)                     |
| 1600          | Continuation of the 1500s category                                 |
| 1800          | Known to have been used, but type of material unknown              |
| 1900          | Female vocal?  |
| 2000          | Popular songs  |
| 2100          | Possibly a continuation of 2000s, but duets predominate after 2150 |
| 2500          | Specialities (Spencer & Hunter or Len Spencer solos)               |
| 2700          | Jones and Spencer and vaudeville specialties                       |
| 3000 upwards: | All material issued together; highest known issue No.3351          |











ten inches, and some eight-inch Excelsior Records were produced. The John M. Smyth Company (No.10) and the Duplex Phonograph Co. (No.15) are known to have acquired records from other firms. Only one example of Nos. 5 and 7 have been found: the Buckeye came to my attention at the Michigan Antique Phonograph Society's Phonovention just last August. Ohio is called "The Buckeye State"; hence the name on the label. No.6 represents a no-name label and apparently these were pressed with the top blank. Small stores could then rubber-stamp the name to have their own record label. Nos. 13 and 14 are the same store label but with slight variations.

In his "Graphic" article, Bill Bryant states that the last advertisement in the **Talking Machine World** was October 1906, and that the highest listing was No.3211. Among the more popular artists listed then were Joe Belmont, Arthur Collins, Billy Golden, Byron G. Harlan, Ada Jones, Billy Murray, Vess L. Ossman, Dan W. Quinn, Len Spencer, Harry Tally, Alan Turner, George P. Watson, and Leo Zimmerman.

Late in 1908 the American Graphophone Company (makers of Columbia records) sought an injunction against the International Record Company as well as the Leeds and Catlin Company for manufacturing and selling records in violation of the Jones Patent which Columbia held. A restraining order was granted on November 23rd 1908, and though the litigation continued into 1909 the production of IRC Records ceased in November 1908.

Anyone having records of this type, and especially labels not represented in the display shown, is invited to share the data and, if possible, label photocopies, with Bill Bryant, [REDACTED] Portland, Maine, 04102 USA.



## Oxford '89

by Ken Loughland

**O**XFORD '89 will be held on Sunday 28th May, the actual 70th Anniversary, to the day, of the formation of our Society. As befits this notable event we will be addressed by four very distinguished speakers:

**Jeff Link**, who will deal with "Gramophone Rarebits". Mr. Link is a BBC producer, responsible for some recent fascinating radio broadcasts on the history of the talking machine.

**Bennett Maxwell**, of long BBC experience, has produced programmes on early cylinders. He will take us back to the time of Edison's representative in Britain, Colonel George Gouraud, and present a programme of Edison's earliest cylinders.

**Paul Morby**, of Birmingham University, previously held a senior position in BBC TV. He will present a talk on "The Two Tenors from Montegnana", namely the operatic and recording artists Giovanni Martinelli and Aureliano Pertile. There will be an associated pictorial display. Back in 1963 Mr. Morby was responsible for a programme which involved many of our members.

**Joe Pengelly**, ex-BBC and a CLPGS member noted particularly for his knowledge of techniques for the electrical reproduction of cylinder records, will concentrate on this topic, in which general interest remains strong.

We can learn a lot from these speakers, and it would be worthwhile to bring a notebook and a well-sharpened pencil.

Details of the venue of OXFORD '89 will be found elsewhere in this magazine. The cost of £18 per head includes coffee on arrival and a 3-course lunch. If overnight accommodation is required apply direct to the Moat House Hotel at Wolvercote (0865-59933). **NO TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE HOTEL ON THE DAY.** They must be obtained in advance from our Treasurer, Mike Field. Places are limited: first come, first served, so hurry now! Come and participate at this highlight in our Society's distinguished history.

# People, Paper & Things

by George Frow

**D**URING HER NOVEMBER PROGRAMME at Bloomsbury Suzanne Lewis played Harry Lauder's 1918 Appeal for funds for disabled Scottish ex-servicemen, on the rarely-found HMV D 1. Most of us had not heard it before, although years ago the late John McKeown played the shorter Zonophone GO 29 at a meeting. Harry Lauder was always reported as saying he never signed contracts, and that a handshake from him was sufficient, but a letter in the Edison files indicates the contrary. In February 1910 there was an exchange between the Edison company and Victor, as it was found that Lauder was making Victor records during his Edison contract, which ran until April 1912. All the same he made several dozen excellent cylinders for Edison and many of them were being reissued until the end of the 1920s. Whether one likes Lauder or not, his voice was a "natural" for records, and undoubtedly his homely humour gave comfort and cheer to fellow countrymen all over the world. Despite a humble upbringing in Portobello, his appeal to fellow Scots for one pound each towards the £1,000,000 fund indicated how out of touch he must have been with what people were earning at the end of 1918. There were many in menial jobs who would have been lucky to see £1 at the end of the week, and this he must surely have known. Conversely he did not complain that his Victor/HMV records went out on the expensive label, and even his "economy" Zonophones were 4s.0d., later 3s.6d., in Great Britain. As is generally known, Lauder fostered a reputation for being stingy, although in the years since his death several people have pointed to his generosity. His anxiety to extract £1 each from his fellow Scots may have been brought on by the sorrow of losing his only son in the War.

\* \* \*

The earliest significant orchestral recordings made in Great Britain were of the 40-strong Palace Theatre Orchestra of London, directed by Herman Finck. The orchestra is generally credited with making some of the first multiple record

sets, issued on the German double-sided Odeon label, the Nutcracker Suite (April 1909) and the music from A Midsummer Night's Dream, each on four records. The Nutcracker Suite created a 'first', being sold in an album (for 16s.0d.). The cost of the three days for making the records was quoted by **The Sound Wave** as more than £800. Their success encouraged The Gramophone Company to have Landon Ronald start recording with the New Symphony Orchestra in 1910. As conductor at the Palace Theatre (from 1900 when he succeeded Alfred Plumpton) Finck was quite brilliant. He was born Hermann von der Finck in London in 1872. His father Louis von der Finck was conductor successively at Drury Lane and the Gaiety; Herman was to follow him eventually to Drury Lane in the twenties to conduct some of the greatest musicals ever staged there: The Desert Song, Rose Marie, Showboat, and New Moon. His name is on the records Columbia made with such assiduity. Before transferring to Columbia he had been Musical Director for Odeon Records. Finck's most famous composition was "In the Shadows", adapted from an earlier intermezzo, "Twilight". In 1910 it became so familiar it begat another song in protest: "Don't play 'In the Shadows'" (featured by Wilkie Bard on HMV B 4132). Other of his light pieces still heard are "Vivienne" and "Two Dances: A la Gavotte and A la Minuet". A cassette of Herman Finck and his Palace Orchestra on Odeons of c.1908-1919 is recommended. The programme is made up of light music of the day, including many of Finck's compositions. What has become of this pleasant kind of music? Thank heavens for such recordings.

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HERMAN FINCK AND THE PALACE THEATRE ORCHESTRA  
c.1908-1919; Cassette VH13. VLMS, [redacted]  
[redacted] West Wickham, England, BR4 9DJ.  
Price £2.75 (UK); £3.00 (abroad) post free.

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\* \* \*

It is probable that even the youngest collector will know the surnames of The Two Leslies (Holmes and Sarony), but there are some duettists whose use of their first names alone will perplex the most experienced record chaser. It's nice to know whom you are dealing with;



Layton and Johnson or Flotsam and Jetsam will bring a warm recognition of a particular talent, but faced with Sid and Alf on Parlophone, Gene and Glenn on Zonophone, Mac and Bob, or the prolific Bert and Bob on Decca and Regal-Zonophone, one would surely have had an incentive to spend the money on something else. These people carried no weight at all on music hall bills or wireless programmes. Bob and Muriel recorded for Columbia but Muriel and Bob made a record for Decca. Perhaps the people at Decca were a little more chivalrous, but who was Muriel? Muriel George, perhaps? On some of his records Jack Hulbert was accompanied by Eddie and Rex; presumably they had surnames and were perhaps known in other groups. No doubt these records sold or we wouldn't come across them: some may have given employment to a drifting band of gramophone entertainers between the wars. Charles Penrose, Harry Fay and George Buck (of Casey's Court) come readily to mind. It would not be difficult to list other Sids and Alfs; most were usually described as entertainers, and more recently in the television age every child knew that Bill and Ben were Flower Pot Men.

\* \* \*

HMV D 2002, as every collector will know, is the Quintet from Die Meistersinger. The contralto Gladys Parr who sang Magdalene on this famous record died in November at the age of 96. She was a veteran of the early days of Opera in English in this country. This seems to be her only record, certainly on the main labels. The principals on D 2002 were Elisabeth Schumann, Melchior, and Schorr, with Ben Williams as David, and Gladys Parr. In welcoming the record in January 1932 as a fine performance, Herman Klein had a slight reservation of Schumann in the final climax and would have liked to hear more sonority. Listening on today's equipment it seems difficult to criticise on such grounds. The stature of the singers supporting the principals on these 78 quartet, quintet, and sextet recordings is interesting. One such was the tenor Angelo Bada on Caruso, Gigli groups (e.g., DQ 100 and 102, and 2-054034). He made his first appearance at the Met in Aida in November 1908 and continued there in

supporting parts into the 1930s. Another was Giuseppe Nessi on Columbia on that company's Concerted singles and Opera sets from Milan. Away from the big names, artists like these could play principal parts in provincial opera houses. Further down in the operatic wines and spirits are those individuals from the chorus who sometimes had the opportunity to interject two or three words while the great star was in full spate. Usually it is as a courtier, villager, servant or spear carrier whose fate it is to be passed on from generation to generation of collectors, anonymous but immortal.

\* \* \*

**Revolutions in Sound.** A short account of the opening of the Exhibition at the National Sound Archive by HRH The Princess Margaret appeared in these pages last August. The exhibition was to have run only until the Spring, but is now continuing at least until the end of 1989, and members may wish to pay it a visit. The theme is the history of the record since Berliner's work 100 years ago, and just about the whole range from Berliners to CD are on display. Noticeable was a glass case with oddities including differently-shaped Pop records, and picture records. Machines are on display, from the earliest simple Berliner to the Victor auto-changer for that company's 45rpm 7-inchers. Portables and radiograms are also shown. We learn that the first public demonstration of the Gramophone and its plates was in Philadelphia on May 16th 1888, that Berliner's "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" was given an early review in THE QUEEN magazine, and that Billy Golden was the first artist to make Gramophone records. A layout of early and unusual machines is on the upstairs landing with children's and picnic portables on show. There are waxes, stampers, and masters; royal and special microphones; and early letter headings from Joseph Berliner onwards. In the absence of anything at present in the Science Museum, this little exhibition is the only one in London.

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REVOLUTIONS IN SOUND Exhibition. The National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London SW7. Open 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. weekdays, admission free..

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## Letters

### Return of a Lapsed Member

Dear Mr. Cunningham,

I am pleased to renew my contact with the Society after forty years. I have a lot of interest in old recordings and hope to get back from my elder brother a Berliner which I parked with him many years back (Marsden & Borwell 1898). I am very pleased with the *Hillandale News*, most impressed with the contents and sure I will find much to inform me. I wonder if you know anyone who could help me with a couple of queries regarding records:

[1] HENRY HELME: Jumbo Blue Label. Side A: "Once". On label, No.A23062; in the wax, Cat.No.105; A23062; (written) LX01(33?) AB. Side B: "Jack's the Boy" (Geisha). On label, A23072; in the wax, Cat.No.105; A23072; (written) LX0140 P6. Sounds like Henry Lytton: could it be?

[2] PIONEER MILITARY BAND. Pioneer, black with gold ship. Side A: "Rare Bit Friends" (printed on the label); announced as "The Dream of the Rare Bit Fiends". On label, 165; 1376; in the wax, 031376. Side B: "Red March" (printed on the label); announced as "Morning Bells". On the label, 165; 1023; in the wax, 031023 plus a tiny 'B'. This sounds early and American, perhaps from imported masters. Any information?

Yours, Eric M. Potts

Tunbridge Wells, 28th January

### Frank Andrews has some information:

Henry Helme seems to have recorded only for Jumbo, so the name is probably a pseudonym adopted for that label. Looking at his assorted repertoire over sixteen or so records I would think it unlikely he was Henry Lytton. The record was issued in September 1908. Your other record is quite interesting. Originally it came from the American Record Company, being pressed in blue material and having a white label with red and blue printing, showing a Red Indian sitting on the ground listening to a gramophone. The American Record Company was put out of business through legal action from the combined forces of Victor and Columbia. 'When the defeated company's assets came to be auctioned off, Victor and Columbia gave warning that anybody in the USA purchasing and using American Record Company

masters would be subjected to rigorous legal proceedings. It thus became an easy matter for these masters to be acquired by an English company, to appear eventually under the Pioneer label. (The gold ship is the "Victory"). Side A originally appeared in the USA in October 1906, Side B in late 1905 or early 1906; but it was 1914 before they both appeared in the UK on the Pioneer label.

The "Pioneer Military Band" was originally the Regimental Band of the Republic, and the anomalies between the announced titles and those on the UK labels are not untypical.

It seems that the announcer's diction does not come through distinctly, because the true title of "Red March" is not "Morning Bells" but "NORTHERN BELLES": it is classified on the original label as a Two-Step.

### Irish Folk Music

Dear Mr. Cunningham,

Thank you for carrying the notice of my *Short Discography of Irish Folk Music*, and for getting such an admirable discographer as Pekka Gronow to review it.

In fairness to myself, I have to say that the LP cited as an omission by Pekka, "The Wheels of the World", is in fact included in the booklet under its original publisher Morning Star Records, along with its Shanachie Records reissue number and date. More interesting however is Pekka's understanding of the word 'discography'. The word hasn't yet, as far as I know, found its way into the standard dictionaries (with the honorable exception of the *New Grove*), and the *Hillandale News* would seem a good forum for discussing its connotations. For myself, I use 'discography' on the model of 'bibliography' as a generic term for any serious listing of any type of sound recordings ('cylinderography', 'tape-ography', and the like seem to me impossibly pedantic), and qualify the term by such attributives as 'short', 'artist', 'numerical' and so on. I don't think that the bare word need in itself imply very detailed information, but doubtless others will disagree and a debate in your columns should generate some light, preferably light without heat.

Best wishes, Nicholas Carolan  
Irish Traditional Music Archive, Dublin  
13th February



## Discography

Dear Ted,

With reference to the word 'discography'. Was it coined by Compton MacKenzie circa December 1929, and used in print for the first time in the January 1930 issue of **The Gramophone**? I quote from page 345 of that edition:

"I have often thought I should like to start a museum to house one specimen of every kind of disc record ever published. I wonder how many there would be? I wish some devoted reader would set himself the task of making out a list. I am sure I am voicing the opinion of our readers when I say how much we should like such an article. 'A Discography of Gramophone Records up to date' the article should be called. Now who will volunteer for this noble but arduous task?"

If any readers of **The Hillandale News** have an earlier printed reference I would welcome chapter and verse.

Best wishes, Jim Hayes  
Liverpool, 14th February

## Hillandale News?

Dear Ted,

Here is an amusing quote from the **Scientific American** of January 1889.

"Subscribers to whom are rented phonographs can have left at their doors every morning the waxy tablets known as phonograms, which can be wrapped about a cylinder and used in the phonograph. On these tablets will be impressed from the clear voice of a good talker a condensation of the best news of the day, which subscribers can have talked back at them as they sit at their breakfast tables."

Well, maybe some of the technical detail is suspect, and maybe this is not quite a substitute for TV-AM; but at least it anticipates the radio news summary. I wonder whether it ever happened?

Yours sincerely, G.W. Taylor  
Harrogate, 31st January

## Frank Ferera

Dear Sir,

I read with interest George Frow's speculations on Frank Ferera's career. In fact a substantial amount of detail has been recorded, and although I have done no original research myself I am happy to pass on the results of other collectors' efforts. Ferera was actually of Portuguese descent. Ranch hands from Portugal and Spain entered Hawaii during the mid-nineteenth century, presumably Ferera's father among them. Ferera was born in Honolulu on 12th June 1882, and supposedly died 26th June 1951, although one source puts him as still alive in 1960 and living in Queens, New York City. He came to the U.S. mainland around 1902, and was a regular performer in vaudeville theatres, travelling tent shows, clubs and other venues. Helen Louise was Ferera's **wife** and, as noted, they recorded together on several occasions. It seems likely to me that she was also Helen Paaluhi, which would probably mean that John Paaluhi was her brother. 'Palakiko' was apparently a pseudonym used by Ferera on occasion. Considering that one estimate suggests Ferera was present on a quarter of all Hawaiian 78rpm discs ever issued, he has not been well served by reissue companies. One track on 'Hula Blues' (Rounder 1012) and another on 'Hawaiian Steel Guitar Classics, Vol.2' (Folklyric 9037) are the only ones known to me. Fortunately plenty of his original discs can still be found, often for a few pence. My sources for the above are various entries in the useful though flawed volume **Hawaiian Music and Musicians** (Honolulu; University Press of Hawaii, 1979) edited by George S. Kanahale; and the sleeve notes to Rounder 1012 (by Robert Gear) and to Folklyric 9037 (by Bill Brozman). The former contains a partial Hawaiian music discography, including complete listings of the work of Peachy and Mendelssohn in England. You could order the book from A & R Booksearch on 0503 20246, and the records from Red Lick Records on 0766 770990. Other master Hawaiian musicians such as King Nawahi and Sol Hoopii are finally getting well-deserved reissues, and maybe Ferera's turn is just around the corner. I hope so.

Yours, Keith Chandler  
Eynsham, 14th February

# London Meetings

## MORE VIOLINISTS ON RECORD

by Plum Label

**C**HARLES LEVIN MADE A welcome return to Bloomsbury and began his second programme on violinists with a 1904 recording of Pablo de Sarasate, a typically Spanish piece of his own composition. Then came a recording by the German-born Hugo Heerman, a Beka-Meister disc of c.1910, of "Dudziarz" by Wieniawski. Paul Kochanski played Brahms on a Vocalian late acoustic and then, in sensitive partnership with Arthur Rubinstein, more Brahms, the D minor Sonata. This collaboration reputedly sprang from a lunchtime encounter with Fred Gaisberg at the Savoy Hotel. A curiosity followed: Fritz Kreisler as a pianist in Dvorak's "Humoreske". Harry Solloway, a pupil of Hubay, played a further excerpt from the Brahms Sonata, this time on a late acoustic Homochord. In a short "commercial" interlude we heard, among other things, the 1906 G & T Christmas message to dealers by the London manager, F.W. Dixon. More fine fiddlers followed, including the splendid American violinist Eddy Brown in a fiendishly fingered "Witches' Dance" by one Kúzdö, and then, more satisfying musically, in part of the Grieg G major Sonata on the minority Royale label. Lastly we heard Eugene Ormandy with bow instead of baton in a 1922 recording of the Bach-Gounod "Ave Maria", making a serene end to the presentation. Another good talk from one who knows his subject. Slides were shown to add to the interest.

### FUTURE LONDON MEETINGS

Tuesdays 7.00 p.m. at the Bloomsbury Institute, 4th Floor, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Chapel, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W.C.2

18th April: MUSIC WHILE YOU WORK; bring a record about a Profession, Trade, or Occupation. 30th May: Howard Hope, TALKING MACHINE TOPICS. 20th June: CYLINDER PROGRAMME, to be announced.

## TUDOR CHURCH MUSIC

by A.O. Leon-Hall

**F**OR CENTURIES A TREASURY of great English music lay neglected. The choral music of such giants as Thomas Tallis, William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons and others was never performed and thus remained unknown. A mere hundred years ago publishers were unwilling to bring out editions, and nobody thought it odd when the Librarian of the British Museum, Barclay Squire, lecturing on the original manuscripts, spoke highly of the bindings, the inks, and the calligraphy, but warned that the actual music was not attractive to the modern ear.

Timothy Day has compiled a Discography of Tudor Church Music (to be published by The British Library National Sound Archive later this year) and he came to Bloomsbury to give us an intriguing account of the rediscovery of these lost masterpieces, at first by two men; Richard Terry, organist and choirmaster at Westminster Cathedral (and incidentally conductor of London's first performance of Elgar's "Gerontius"), and Edmund Fellowes, a minor canon of St. George's Chapel, Windsor. They led the way in an uphill struggle, and in time were joined by others: the BBC Singers in the 1930s, the BBC Third Programme in the 1940s; George Malcolm at Westminster Cathedral in the 1960s; Sir David Willcox at King's College, Cambridge.

Mr. Day traced the music's gradual recognition and played some of the records it generated. Fellowes and the Windsor Choir in 1927, performing Gibbons' "Hosannah to the Son of David" on Columbia; The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford; Denis Stevens' Ambrosian Singers; the Clerkes of Oxenford, and today's remarkable Tallis Scholars. As we listened, rapt, to this exalted, lofty music, we felt a rapport with the young lady attending a performance of madrigals at the London Coliseum in 1927, who was heard to remark, "It ain't music, and it ain't singin', but ain't it 'eaven?"



## Regional News

by John Calvert

The Clockwork Music Group. Phil Bailey sends a report covering the Group's activities over the past year. The Group continues to meet as it has done for the past eleven years, using the Newcastle Science Museum, with a mixture of CLPGS members and various others. The meeting room which is on the third floor of the museum, does tend to discourage members bringing along heavy and bulky objects, but usually there are a number of goodies on display at most meetings, e.g., an Edison Bell Picturegram and a Diamond Disc Player. During 1988, the Group held five meetings covering a wide range of subjects, which included an illustrated talk on Gigli, by David Taylor, who has appeared on 'Mastermind', a talk by a real live troupier; Veronica Twiddle and an excellent Talking Machine Day, which was organised and presented by Fred and Cyril Hay. One exciting piece of information which came to light during the year was that the local Bagpipe Museum and Society had unearthed a collection of home recorded cylinders, made many years ago on a Fireside Phonograph, which they still own. It is hoped that the cylinders are in playable condition since they may contain interesting early recordings of Northumbrian pipes and folk songs etc. If this find proves playable maybe someone will have a CD made of them! Future meetings: Saturdays, 1.45 p.m., Activity Room, Science Museum, Blandford Street, Newcastle upon Tyne. April 29th: FABULOUS FIFTIES (provisional). June 24th: to be announced. September 16th: DEVELOPMENT OF THE WIRELESS: audio-visual by Fred Hay. December 9th: MAGIC LANTERN SHOW by Derek Greenacre.

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## Compact Discourse

### HOW MANY FORMATS DO WE NEED?

by Eliot Levin of Symposium Records

SEVERAL "HILLANDALE NEWS" readers have written to us recently expressing the hope that we will make our new releases available as Long Playing records or as cassettes as well as Compact Discs, as they have no intention of buying (or cannot afford) a CD player, or think that they are not so good. May I make the following point?

Since 1877 we have had cylinder; disc (lateral, vertical, acoustic, electric, LP mono, and LP stereo); tape (reel-to-reel and cassette); and CD. A brief perusal of contemporary writings will reveal that each new format was greeted with astonishingly similar phrases of enthusiasm and of dismay.

The fact is that the CD is here to stay, or at any rate to tarry for a while. Whether this is so by popular demand or by forces of big industry, and whether the CD is or is not better than the LP may be interesting but in a sense these are irrelevant questions. The relevant point is that for a company catering for a specialist market to offer its products in two formats or more would be economic suicide.

The compact disc seems to me to offer the following advantages, inter alia, over other current formats:

1. It is far less easily damaged.
2. Selection amongst many short tracks is much easier.
3. Problems of quality control (an almost unceasing nightmare with LPs and not easy with cassettes) hardly arise.
4. There is no question of wear by playing.
5. A CD is far easier to pack and post than an LP, true also of a cassette.

One disadvantage is that the LP presents a large display surface; it is very hard to make CD booklets look attractive. An unknown quantity is long term storage life. LPs maintained with scrupulous care play like new after 40 years. Accelerated life tests we have performed (and continue to perform) on CDs reveal no cause for concern.

CD players can now be purchased for as little as £150: they sound identical to any at up to £800. (Whether or not machines at twice that figure are any better is a moot point.) Where does one buy an even half-decent turntable, arm, and cartridge for £150? Finally, there is no law that the purchaser of a CD may not simultaneously possess recordings in other formats.

# Record Reviews

AGNES NICHOLLS

by G. W. Taylor

## ELGAR AT THE PIANO

by Ken Loughland

ELGAR WAS NOT A pianistic composer. He wrote very little for the solo piano, and never composed at the keyboard. Musical inspirations came to him essentially as orchestral abstractions; in fact, he once told Dora Penny ("Dorabella" of the Enigma Variations) that he hated the piano, but we must remember that it was part of his complex character to make wild and often contradictory statements. Elgar used the piano not as an essential aid to composition, but rather to try over completed themes or sections after they had been written down. It was, nonetheless, Elgar's own suggestion that he should record some of his improvisations at the piano, and Fred Gaisberg accordingly arranged for the Small Queen's Hall in London to be made available on 6th November 1929. The results of this remarkable hour are here on a three-disc set of pressings from the original 78 masters (matrix numbers Bb.18129 and Cc 18130-33). In the first improvisation Elgar builds carefully on a theme from Rossini's ballet music from "William Tell". Coming from the Bb (or 10") matrix, it is the shortest of the set at nearly 3½ minutes, although still a shade too long to avoid the swish and whistle heard in the last few seconds. The second improvisation is poetic and unmistakably E.E. The third made me think of Schumann, one of Elgar's favourites. It is more gymnastic than the first two. The fourth is a bright impressionist painting of a riverside idyll: by the banks of the Severn, of course. The fifth, darker and more serious, was a piece I felt I needed to hear repeatedly to get its full flavour.

Never previously issued on 78s, these recordings were marked "hold indefinitely" by HMV. They were eventually included in an LP set in 1974 and soon deleted, but here we have five sides pressed in vinyl from the original masters. They play well with a 0.0035" stylus in a lightweight pickup. The sixth (blank) side carries a label-size back view picture of Elgar playing the piano at Napleton Grange, one of his last homes. The set has been carefully produced, despite one or two aural blemishes unavoidable due to the age of the matrices. It is of prime interest to Elgarians, giving a fascinating opportunity to overhear the composer in an unfamiliar role.

SIR EDWARD ELGAR, 'FIVE IMPROVISATIONS'. Direct pressings in vinyl from original 78 masters. Nos.1022,3,4, from Symposium Records, [redacted] East Barnet, Hertfordshire EN4 8LZ. £18.00 complete (not available separately) plus postage, UK £1.50, Europe £2.50, elsewhere by arrangement.

AGNES NICHOLLS (1876-1959) was a leading British soprano in opera, oratorio, and on the concert platform during the first quarter of this century. She was married to the conductor and composer Hamilton Harty. This album contains thirteen of her recordings made between 1909 and 1922. The publisher's catalogue says it contains "the complete solo recordings for the first time on LP, and the first release of two made for Columbia." The excellent programme notes tell us that Nicholls made 58 recordings for HMV and Columbia but few survive: she was notoriously critical of her records. Recording dates, matrix and catalogue numbers are listed. With two exceptions all the recordings are of songs (generally with Harty accompaniment) and most are of period pieces by composers such as Cowen and Liddle, hardly the height of fashion nowadays. Also included are three excerpts from 'Starlight Express' recorded under Elgar himself in 1916, and two delightful old folk songs recorded for Columbia in 1922 and previously unpublished. The two non-song items are the 1910 version of 'Ocean thou mighty monster' from Weber's 'Oberon', and that old oratorio war horse 'I will extoll thee' from the now forgotten 'Eli' by Sir Michael Costa, a splendid piece.

Though Agnes Nicholls had a powerful voice somewhat reminiscent of Eva Turner's, and hard to record by the old process, most of the performances on this album come across well, with the clean attack much in evidence. The engineers have evidently sought to transfer everything on the original discs, warts and all. This gives the sound the immediacy of the original 78s, but at the cost of a torrent of hiss and rumble; some of the starts and stops are very abrupt, and an assault on the ears. Most listeners will not mind the background noise, and the plus point is the excellence of the reproduction, not only of the voice but also of the accompaniment. Harty's piano even in 1909 sounds very fine, and the organ accompaniment on the 1911 recording of the Liddle song is of remarkable fidelity. Two of the recordings also appear on EMI's Record of Singers Vol.1. Some listeners will prefer EMI's sanitised sound (which is indeed very good), but with this Symposium issue you have more scope for adjusting the sound to your own taste.

AGNES NICHOLLS, Symposium Record 1021. Side A: The Lark now leaves (Parker); At the mid hour of night (Cowen); A Bride Song (Cowen); Eli: I will extoll thee (Costa); Oberon: Ocean thou mighty monster (Weber); When the heart was young (Buck). Side B: How lovely are thy dwellings (Liddle); Starlight Express: The Laughter's Song, Hearts must be soft, Tears and laughter and sunrise song (Elgar); In a Persian Garden (Lehmann); I sent my soul into the invisible; Have you seen but a whyte lillie grow (anon); Come my one own (anon). From Symposium Records £6.00 plus postage: details as for Elgar.



# French Revolutions

CHARLES CROS ET LES AUTRES

by Peter Martland

I SPENT THE NEW YEAR in Paris, where apart from having a delightful time enjoying the sights and the cuisine of that most elegant city, I had the opportunity to visit a most remarkable and most Gallic exhibition to celebrate the gramophone centenary. The exhibition, the brainchild of La Phonothèque Nationale, was held at the Bibliothèque Nationale. It examined two themes; the first, an exhibition of talking machines, telephones and radios, with the emphasis firmly on the talking machines. The second centred around the French contribution to the development of the talking machine. In particular the key role that Charles Cros played, in the view of many Frenchmen, in conceiving of a machine that could store up and reproduce sound.

The first theme was a feast to the eyes, with a rich array of machines and sounds. The Edison machine used at the 1889 exhibition was there, complete with listening tubes. It looked as though it had been removed from the Edison stand only the day before. In addition, there was a box of wax cylinders made at the time. This tantalised us into thinking just what treasures had the Phonothèque Nationale got hidden away in its vaults? The cylinders were in the main recordings by Eiffel, his family, and other contemporary French notables. Other exhibits illustrated familiar yet varied models of talking machines, all with recordings taken from the actual machines to highlight their sound qualities. Of particular interest were the French machines: Lioret, Pathé Frères, and a French-built Bettini machine. Other talking machines included a weird yet wonderful collection of mainly French manufactured portables and miniature gramophones from the interwar years. One, I recall, was in the form of a book!

In addition to the machine and sound exhibition, I was able to see an exhibition of the works of Charles Cros, including the famous 1877 letter to the French Academy of Science outlining his

thoughts on sound recording. Leaving that to one side for a moment, and turning to Cros the poet - for that is what he saw himself as. I had always understood Cros to be a second rate romantic poet. However, after reading the verse in his exhibition, my two companions and I were of one mind and agreed that in fact he was a fourth rate poet who wrote some of the more forgettable late nineteenth century romantic verse.

Regarding the famous letter, there it was, a couple of sheets of manuscript setting out in a remarkable way Cros' thoughts on sound recording. It is not appropriate for me to enter the debate surrounding the Cros claim for precedence. However, I was disturbed to see that subtly Cros was elevated in the write-ups from a man who brilliantly outlined some thoughts on sound recording to the man who invented the talking machine - i.e., created a machine that talked.

Whatever my misgivings, I felt that this was an important exhibition and a fascinating one. Sadly by the time you read this the exhibition will have ended (it closes 1st April). The catalogue, unavailable at the time of my visit, can be obtained from the Bibliothèque Nationale, galerie Colbert, 2 rue Vivienne/6, rue des Petits-Champs, Paris 2e, Price Ff180.

## CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH & GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY BRANCH SECRETARIES

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| MIDLANDS               | G. Burton, [REDACTED]                            |
| NEWCASTLE              | (Clockwork Music Group)<br>P. Bailey, [REDACTED] |
| YORKSHIRE              | P. Austwick, [REDACTED]                          |
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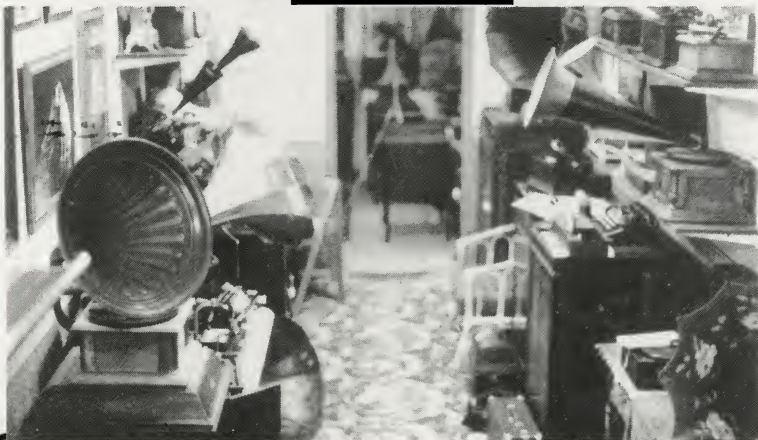
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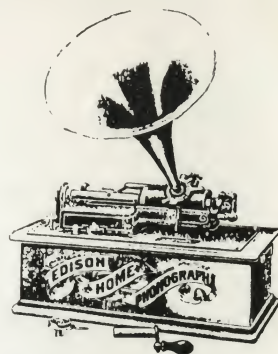


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